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Suffolk County Explores Housing Opportunities for Young Adults



(Left to Right) Long Island Housing Partnership Jennifer Appel, Suffolk County Community College President Dr. Shaun McKay, County Executive Steve Bellone, Community Development Corporation of Long Island President and CEO Marianne Garvin, and Long Island Builders Institute CEO Mitch Pally.

Brentwood, NY, December 2013 – Today, Legislator Sarah Anker joined County Executive Steve Bellone and Suffolk County Community College President Dr. Shaun McKay to announce plans to begin a feasibility study to explore the development of workforce housing for young professionals. The announcement took place at Suffolk Community College's Grant Campus, two weeks after Anker's Legislation for the study passed unanimously at the November 19th General Legislature Meeting. Housing specialists, including Jennifer Appel of Long Island Housing Partnership, Community Development Corporation of Long Island President and CEO Marianne Garvin, and Long Island Builders Institute CEO Mitch Pally, attended in show of their support.

"The bottom line is that Long Island is experiencing a brain drain," said Legislator Anker. "We are raising smart kids through an excellent educational system but many of our kids are not staying on Long Island because they can't find affordable housing that meets their needs."

Resolution 1533, sponsored by Anker, directs the county's Department of Economic Development and Planning to partner with State and County educational institutions to study the feasibility of building affordable housing for young adults. The department will have 180 days to deliver their findings.

Anker's idea came from a visit to a Planned Retirement Community (PRC) in Anker's district. Anker observed that the PRC provided affordable quality of life housing for seniors and raised the question, "Why can't we do that for our young adults who are struggling to stay on Long Island?" Anker envisions what she has coined as a PYAC, a Planned Young Adult Community, to address the brain drain issue.

“Just like our seniors, who may have limited financial resources, our graduating kids also have financial limitations including limited credit history, limited work experiences and possibly high college loan debt that could be hundreds of thousands of dollars,” said Anker. “Where do they go after they graduate? Currently many are moving back home with their parents, living in basement apartments, or they have left Long Island. We must do more and we are.”

A survey compiled by the Long Island Index states that approximately 82% of Long Islanders feel that young people are leaving Long Island due to the lack of affordable housing and high cost of living.

“In order to continue to build Suffolk's innovative economy we must create housing opportunities for our young professionals,” said County Executive Steve Bellone. “This legislation will allow the County to study the feasibility of the creation of housing opportunities on the campuses of our institutions of higher learning. I applaud Legislator Anker for introducing this legislation and look forward to the results of the study.”

In partnering with State and County post-secondary educational institutions, Suffolk County can focus on attracting young professionals to affordable communities while remaining in compliance with the 1988 Amendments to the Fair Housing Act, which bar age restrictions on housing developments with the exception of 55 and older communities. The county is currently looking into partnerships with institutions including Suffolk County Community College, Stony Brook University, St. Joseph's College, and Dowling College.

"For more than a decade, Long Island has been losing college graduates and young professionals," Suffolk County Community College President Shaun McKay said. "Today, Legislator Anker has put forth a proposal, and I look forward to reading the feasibility study when it is completed. At Suffolk County Community College we have been working to stop the outward migration of talent from our region. Since 2010, my Stay on Long Island Initiative, in collaboration with Long Island's four-year colleges and universities, has provided \$2.5 million of scholarships to help Suffolk County Community College's most talented graduates continue their education right here on Long Island. The program cultivates the intellectual capital of those individuals who have the best potential for contributing to the transformation of our region. We will continue to provide these students with exceptional educational experiences and empowering them to compete and garner employment in the new, complex and ever changing job market and prevent them from leaving our region."

Anker also added that by expanding housing opportunities available to young adults, there is the possibility of benefits to our construction trades, college and universities, but most importantly in helping the young population find quality affordable housing.

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